

Message Text

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67

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC RIORITY 3319

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ETRD, EAIR, PFOR, CO

SUBJECT: LOCKHEED SCANDAL HITS COLOMBIA

1. INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM HEARINGS OF THE SENATE SUB-COMMITTEE ON MULTINATIONALS WHICH APPEARS TO LINK LOCKHEED AIRCRAFT TO BRIBERY EFFORTS IN COLOMBIA APPEARED IN ALL MAJOR NEWSPAPERS OVER THE WEEKEND. EL TIEMPO PUBLISHED A SERIES OF FOUR LETTERS, PURPORTEDLY DRAFTED-BY LOCAL LOCKHEED REPS DURING THE PERIOD 1968-1972, WHICH SPECIFICALLY STATE A NEED FOR "EXTRA COSTS OF 100,000 DOLLARS" AND "FOUR TO FIVE PERCENT OF THE SALE PRICE" IN ORDER TO CONCLUDE A TRANSACTION IN COLOMBIA. EL TIEMPO ALSO PUBLISHED A LIST OF CODE WORDS USED BY LOCAL REPS TO IDENTIFY COLOMBIAN AIR FORCE OFFICIALS, TYPES OF AIRCRAFT, ETC (US EMBASSY IS BOLT), WITH THE EXCEPTION OF GENERALS URREGO (COLOMBIAN AIR FORCE COMMANDER 1967-1970) AND CALDERON (AIR FORCE COMMANDER 1970-1974), THE NAMES OF COLOMBIAN OFFICIALS ARE OMITTED FROM THE LETTERS PUBLISHED HERE.

2. PUBLICATION OF LETTERS IMPLICATING COLOMBIAN OFFICIALS HAS PROMPTED GENERAL FEDERICO RINCON, CURRENT COMMANDER OF THE AIR FORCE, TO CALL FOR A COMPLETE INVESTIGATION OF

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THE MATTER. PRESIDENT LOPEZ AND DEFENSE MINISTER VARON

VALENCIA ARE REPORTED TO HAVE MET ON SUNDAY AND ALSO TO HAVE AGREED ON THE NEED FOR A DETAILED INVESTIGATION. RINCON ANNOUNCED THAT, AS PART OF THE INVESTIGATION, THE COLOMBIAN AIR FORCE WILL DEMAND THAT LOCKHEED FURNISH PRECISE INFORMATION REGARDING PAYMENTS MADE TO ANY AIR FORCE OFFICIALS. UNTIL SUCH TIME AS DETAILS ARE RECEIVED FROM LOCKHEED, ACCORDING TO RINCON, THE CHARGES OF BRIBERY ARE BASED EXCLUSIVELY ON LETTERS DRAFTED AND SIGNED BY LOCAL AGENTS OF THE COMPANY (THE PRESS REPORTS THAT ONE AGENT, EDWIN SCHWARTZ, A COLOMBIAN CITIZEN, DISAPPEARED ABOUT A WEEK AGO). GENERAL CALDERON HAS OFFERED HIS COMPLETE COOPERATION IN ANY INVESTIGATION AND HAS POINTED OUT THAT NO PURCHASES WERE MADE FROM LOCKHEED DURING THE TIME THAT HE WAS IN OFFICE.

3. EDITORIAL IN TODAY'S EL TIEMPO SUPPORTS THE NEED FOR AN INVESTIGATION TO DETERMINE THE TRUE FACTS OF THE CASE AND ADDS THAT SUCH AN INVESTIGATION CAN AND SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT OPENLY IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY SUCH AS EXISTS IN COLOMBIA.

4. COMMENT: THE AMBASSADOR HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO RAISE THE STORY WITH FONMIN LIEVANO, WHO PROFESSED TO BE RATHER RELAXED OVER THE ALLEGATIONS AND INDICATED THAT THE PRESIDENT WAS ALSO. LIEVANO SAID THAT NOTHING DEFINITE HAS BEEN PRESENTED YET, AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE LOOKING INTO THE MATTER.

5. DEPENDING ON THE RESULTS OF INVESTIGATIONS HERE, THE BRIBERY ALLEGATIONS COULD BECOME A POLITICAL ISSUE. THE STORY HAS SURFACED AT A TIME WHEN CORRUPTION IN GOVERNMENT HAS BECOME A SUBJECT OF MAJOR CONCERN TO THE GOC, AS EVIDENCED BY THE FACT THAT PRESIDENT LOPEZ HAS PROCLAIMED "MORALIZATION" OF GOVERNMENT AS ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL GOALS OF HIS ADMINISTRATION. PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE CARLOS LLERAS HAS ALSO TAKEN UP THE "CORRUPTION IN GOVERNMENT" THEME AND HAS INDICATED THAT HE WILL SOON HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY ON THE LOCKHEED ISSUE

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6. THE EMBASSY HAS NOT RECEIVED ANY PRESS OR PUBLIC INQUIRIES ON THE STORY. IF WE DO RECEIVE INQUIRES WE PLAN TO REPLY THAT WE HAVE NO INFORMATION ON THE SUBJECT, BUT THAT THE POSITION OF THE US GOVERNMENT, AS CLEARLY SET FORTH BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS AND OTHER DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN, IS THAT WE THOROUGHLY CONDEMN EFFORTS AT BRIBERY BY US CORPORATIONS OR US CITIZENS.

7. IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDIN THAT ONLY COLOMBIAN PUR-
CHASES FROM LOCKHEED IN RECENT YEARS WERE THREE C-130'S
ACQUIRED DURING LATE 1960'S. ARICRAFT WERE OLDER
MODELS WHICH HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN PURCHASED BY CANADA
AND WHICH LOCKHEED HELPED SELL WHEN CANADA BOUGHT
NEWER VERSION. SINCE THAT TIME, LOCKHEED REPS HAVE
BEEN THROUGH HERE FREQUENTLY (MOST RECENTLY ABOUT TWO
WEEKS AGO) IN AN EFFORT TO SELL MORE AIRCRAFT, IN-
CLUDING ADDITONAL C-130'S.
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